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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5427  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002997

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SHEIKH WELCOMES U.S. PARTNERSHIP, STRESSES  
TOLERANCE

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gary A. Grappo for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Mohsin Nayef Faisal al-Jarba, a politically well-connected sheikh in the influential Shammar tribal confederation, told poloff and military chaplains on November 10 that he welcomed continued partnership with the United States. The sheikh stressed support for non-sectarianism, interfaith dialogue, and a more representative government and diplomatic corps. He also warned of Al-Qaida's growing influence in the Mosul region. End Summary.

Sheikh Mohsin: Politically Connected, PM Advisor  
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¶2. (C) Sheikh Mohsin met November 10 with poloff and U.S. military chaplains to exchange views. Mohsin is from a politically well-connected family and is the uncle of both Sheikh Abdullah al-Yawer (a leading member of the "Iraq National Movement" coalition) and Ghazi al-Yawer, Iraq's former interim president. Prior to Saddam's fall, he was active in anti-government opposition efforts. The sheikh traces his lineage from Imam Hussein, son of Ali (revered by Shia), the fourth Khalif and Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law. According to Mohsin, the Ottoman Turks executed members of his family for pan-Arab activism.

¶3. (C) Sheikh Mohsin's business card reads "Prime Minister Advisor." He is not on Maliki's payroll, but reportedly provides the PM with advice on social and agricultural matters. He has also worked on Sons of Iraq/Sahwa issues and supports national reconciliation and interfaith dialogue. As a leader of the Shammar tribal confederation, among Iraq's most prominent and which includes both Sunni and Shia members, Mohsin helps lends credibility to Maliki's "nationalist" credentials.

Desires Good Relations with U.S., Stresses Tolerance  
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¶4. (C) Sheikh Mohsin said he hopes for a strong U.S.-Iraq partnership "for the next fifty years" that will nurture a nascent Iraqi democracy and stem meddling by Iraq's neighbors. He prefers a close U.S. partnership over playing Iraq's neighbors against each other, i.e. close relations with Turkey to balance Iran. "It's like the shepherd who brought a dog to guard his flock against the wolf who was preying on them, only to discover that twice as many sheep were missing." The sheikh also proposed formation of an "Iraqi lobby" in Washington, modeled after Israel's, to solicit continuing U.S. government support and to maintain a strong U.S.-Iraq relationship.

¶5. (C) Sheikh Mohsin pointed to his own Shammar confederation, which he said was sixty-five percent Shia, to illustrate that Iraq's confessional sects have long existed side by side, and that sectarianism is a relatively new development in Iraq. He praised the efforts of Grand Ayatollah Hussein Ismail as-Sadr (Shia head of Baghdad's Kadhmain shrine) at interfaith dialogue, and lauded Lebanese

cleric Mohammed Hassein Fadlallah, who he said was wary of "Iranian danger." (Note: We heard similar praise for Hussein al-Sadr in a recent meeting with the Inspector General for the Sunni religious endowment. Hussein is generally held to be much wiser and more moderate than his nephew Muqtada as-Sadr. End note.)

#### Al Qaida Recruiting in Mosul

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¶6. (C) Sheikh Mohsin said he was preparing a report for Maliki on the deteriorating situation in the Mosul area. According to the sheikh, residents of the area suffer from water shortages, are impoverished and are unable to sustain their traditional livelihoods in agriculture and animal husbandry. The sheikh worried that Al Qaida was finding increasingly fertile ground for recruitment of new members as they exploited residents' suffering.

#### Looking Ahead

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¶7. (C) Sheikh Mohsin highlighted U.S. "mistakes" in the past, which he said included installing Iraqi exiles in the transitional government in 2003. He decried the continuing lack of a truly representative government in Baghdad, and alleged that "many" of Iraq's newly appointed ambassadors are not Iraqi citizens. In addition, he asserted there were parts of Iraq's constitution that needed rewriting (NFI). Nevertheless, the sheikh described himself as patiently "optimistic" for the development of accountable government. "It took you twelve years to develop a constitution in the

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U.S.," he remarked.  
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